

THE GRAND THEATRE | BLACKPOOL

Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to the Grand Theatre.



As a volunteer at the Grand, you become an important part of our team.

This handbook offers general guidance to our volunteering programme and what you can expect from your time volunteering at the Grand.

Information about potential volunteering opportunities is available with the handbook.

By checking out our website you can find more information about what shows and events are coming up over the next year.

We hope you enjoy your volunteering experience with us, and we will do all that we can to help and support you in your role.



Hello and welcome!

Having begun my own journey in theatre as a volunteer I am very aware of the tremendous benefits that volunteers can bring to an organisation such as The Grand and, in return, the advantages that volunteering can offer you.

With the launch of this brand-new programme, we're pleased to be able to extend opportunities to bring people with a wide range of experiences and backgrounds to support us through a new, streamlined, volunteer scheme that will help The Grand to flourish for many years to come. Blackpool's Grand Theatre is a theatre for everyone and I'm keen to ensure that our volunteers, staff and the work on our stage are as reflective of our diverse community as possible.

When you join The Grand as a volunteer, you will be helping our guests to enjoy a safe, magical and unforgettable time while they are here. I hope also that you will enjoy the opportunity to develop your skills, network with colleagues and make new friends.

I look forward to seeing you around the theatre.

Adam Knight
Chief Executive

About the Grand Theatre

The Grand is Blackpool's community theatre. However, our work doesn't stop at the edge of the town or even the Fylde coast, we have partnerships with many of the major names in UK performing arts including the Royal Shakespeare Company, the National Theatre, Sadlers Wells, and ...

We have a nationally recognised programme of engagement with children, young people and families. We support many of the town's key priorities, for example we have an award-winning Creative Engagement team that delivers workshops for children to improve their confidence and resilience.

Who are our volunteers?



Volunteering is an active, all year-round activity. Volunteers work evenings and weekends, some matinees too, but particularly during busy holidays and Christmas times. There are no upper age limits to who can volunteer as we believe that volunteers, across all ages, bring a huge wealth of personal interests, skills, and experience.

Volunteers should be 18 years and over, but we can consider younger people as well – just speak to us about opportunities.

Recruitment



We will accept applications from anyone interested in volunteering with us. We welcome adults from every background and we will do our utmost to accommodate peoples' individual needs within the volunteer role.

We require an electronic application to be completed and returned to the Operations Manager, Shaun Gorrige, who will work with the theatre team to manage rotas and support for the volunteer team.

What we ask of you



- To be punctual and reliable
- To be smart in appearance and to wear your uniform when you are volunteering
- To abide by our staff policies, guidelines, and expectations
- To perform your volunteering role and key responsibilities to the best of your ability
- To participate in training
- To keep yourself informed about upcoming events and performances at the theatre
- To act in the best interests of customers and offer excellent customer service

- To let us know if you cannot cover a shift in suitable time
- To let us know if your contact details or circumstances change at any time

What you can expect from us



- We will provide an induction to the volunteer role
- You will attend a briefing before every front of house shift with a duty manager so that you know what your role for the session is
- We will provide you with a uniform (polo shirt and jacket) and lanyard
- We will offer flexibility within the volunteering role and consider other commitments you may have
- We will aim to resolve any concerns quickly and fairly
- We will provide references for people who have volunteered their time with us
- We will work within the spirit of equality and diversity
- We will follow the policies, procedures, and standards of the organisation in relation to volunteers
- You will have the opportunity to experience live theatre

Volunteering Opportunities

OPPORTUNITY

- **Front of house** – you will be the friendly face of the Grand. The first person our customers see. You will check tickets, show people to their seats, deal with any queries and ensure their visit is enjoyable and memorable
- **Sales** – from time to time you may be asked to sell items to customers, so the ability to work with cash is useful



- **Creative Learning** – there may be the opportunity to work with our creative learning team either in the theatre itself or out in the community
- **Back stage** – there may be the opportunity to learn some new skills supporting the technicians and back stage crew
- **Other** – please speak to us about areas you are interested in. We may be able to help!

Frequently Asked Questions



- **What days will shifts be available?**

Shifts will be available when performances or other events are taking place. There will not be a set timetable for volunteering. Shifts could be available on any day of the week.

- **What times of day will I be expected to be on shift?**

You will be asked to cover shifts when performances are taking place at the theatre. Matinees usually start at 1.30pm and evening performances at 7.30pm. We expect you to be at the theatre 60 minutes prior to the start of each show to have time to attend a briefing and get the front of house ready for the audience.

For pantomime and children's shows there are morning performances as well so you would need to be at the theatre at around 9am if you are covering these shifts.

- **How long will each shift be?**

Times will vary according to the length of each performance, and you will be expected to stay until the theatre is closed – usually around 4 hours in total (though occasionally more).

- **How will I know if I have a shift?**

We will be using the same electronic system that our theatre staff use. You will be asked if you have availability and you can accept or decline these shifts.

- **Will I be working alone?**

There will be a team working on every shift. This will be made up of a Duty Manager, theatre staff and volunteers, so there will always be other people around for support and guidance.

- **What do I wear?**

We will provide every volunteer with a uniform consisting of polo shirt (x2), jacket and lanyard. We ask that you wear your own black trousers or skirt and black shoes.

- **Will I be handling cash?**

You may be asked to sell programmes or other items from time to time, so you may be asked to handle money or use contactless payment systems.

- **Is there a lot of standing/moving around involved?**

In general, yes, but we want to encourage people from the whole community to become volunteers at the Grand and we are happy to discuss individual needs with you if standing or mobility is an issue.

- **Will there be the opportunity to volunteer in other departments?**

Yes. We will be offering volunteer opportunities in different departments. Please speak to us about your interests.

- **Will I get expenses?**

Unfortunately, we are not able to offer any expenses for travel or refreshments.

Health and well being



There are many reasons why you have volunteered and volunteering can itself impact positively on your general health and wellbeing. For instance, working in a creative environment, by making new friends, improving their CV, and helping others, many volunteers feel an improvement in their own self-esteem.

However, it would be useful to know from you if you have any health conditions that may affect your volunteering, such as asthma or other allergies, epilepsy, or any mental health conditions.

All information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Reliability and Commitment



- We ask that you commit to attending the shifts you have agreed to work
- We ask that you arrive an hour before the start of each performance so that you can attend a staff briefing
- We ask that you let us know well in advance if you are unable to attend your shift for any reason
- We ask that you stay on shift, supporting your colleagues until the theatre is tidied and locked up at the end of each performance

Thank you!



We can never say this enough.

We thank you for your time, energy, willingness, and commitment to help make the Grand Theatre a vibrant and welcoming place for our audiences

VANITY FAIR Supplement



"Archibut Machin"

(Frank Machin)